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OCR A Level

Computer
Science

H446 – Paper 1

3

Network security and threats

Unit 5
Networks and web
technologies



PG ONLINE

Objectives

- Discuss network security and threats
- Discuss use of firewalls, proxies and encryption
- Discuss worms, Trojans and viruses and the vulnerabilities that they exploit

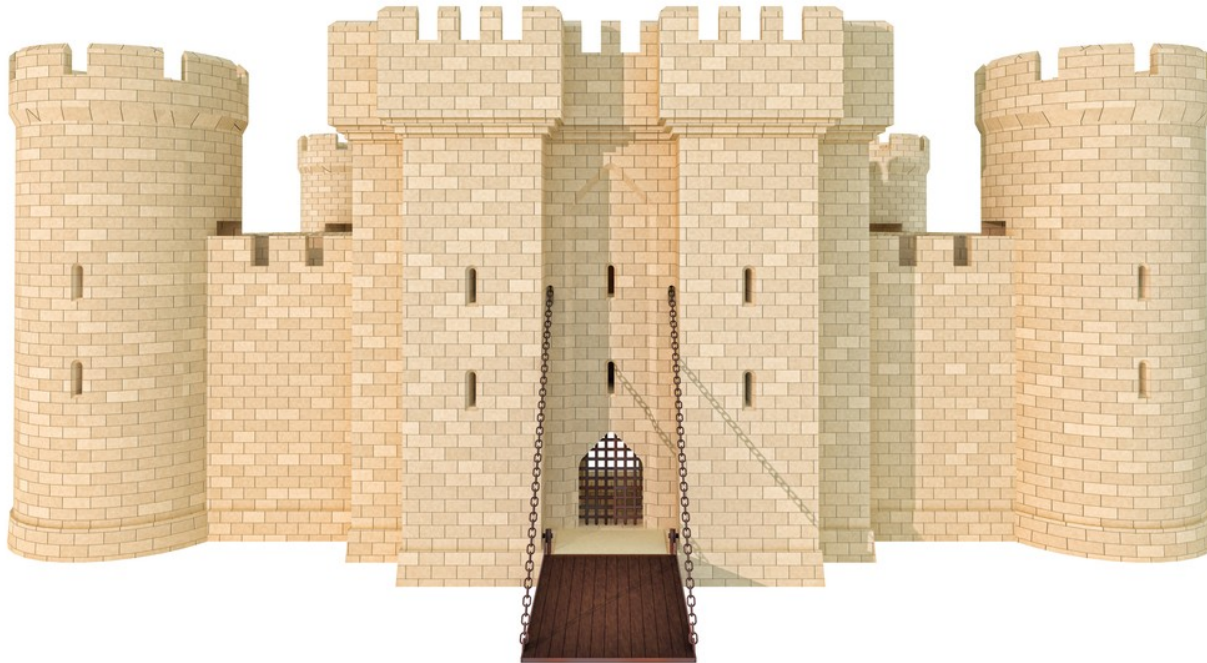
Starter

- A file is being transferred from Chile to India
 - What risks are involved in sending confidential information within the file?



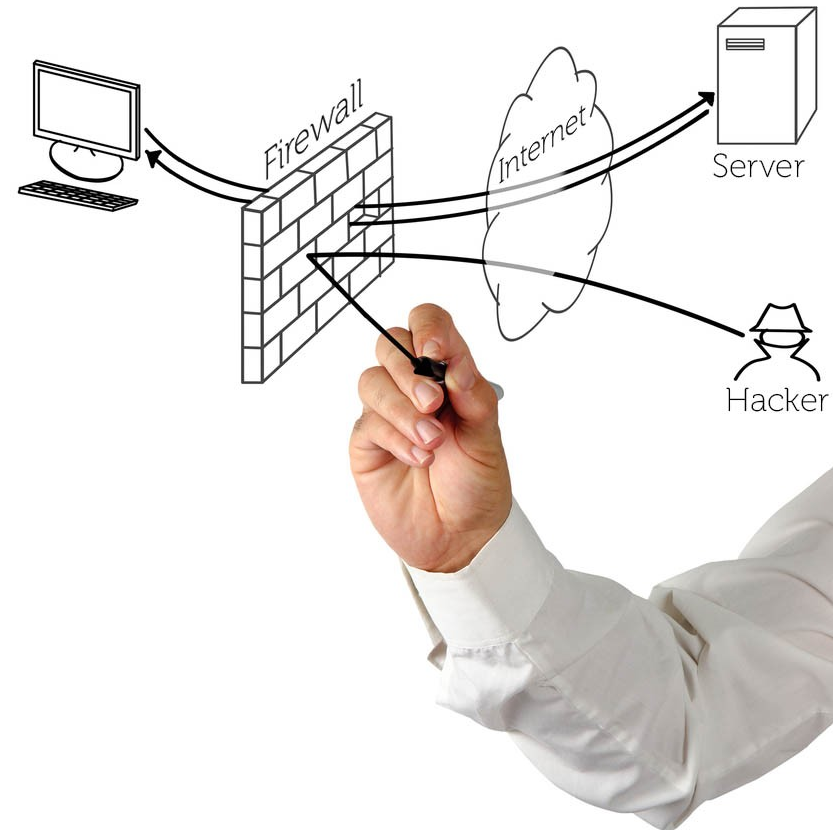
Castle security

- How can you get in or out of a castle?
 - What can you do to stop people entering or leaving?



Firewall

- The entrance to a network can be protected in the same way
 - A firewall is either software or hardware that controls access to and from a network
 - Numbered doors called **ports** are opened so that only certain traffic is allowed to pass through

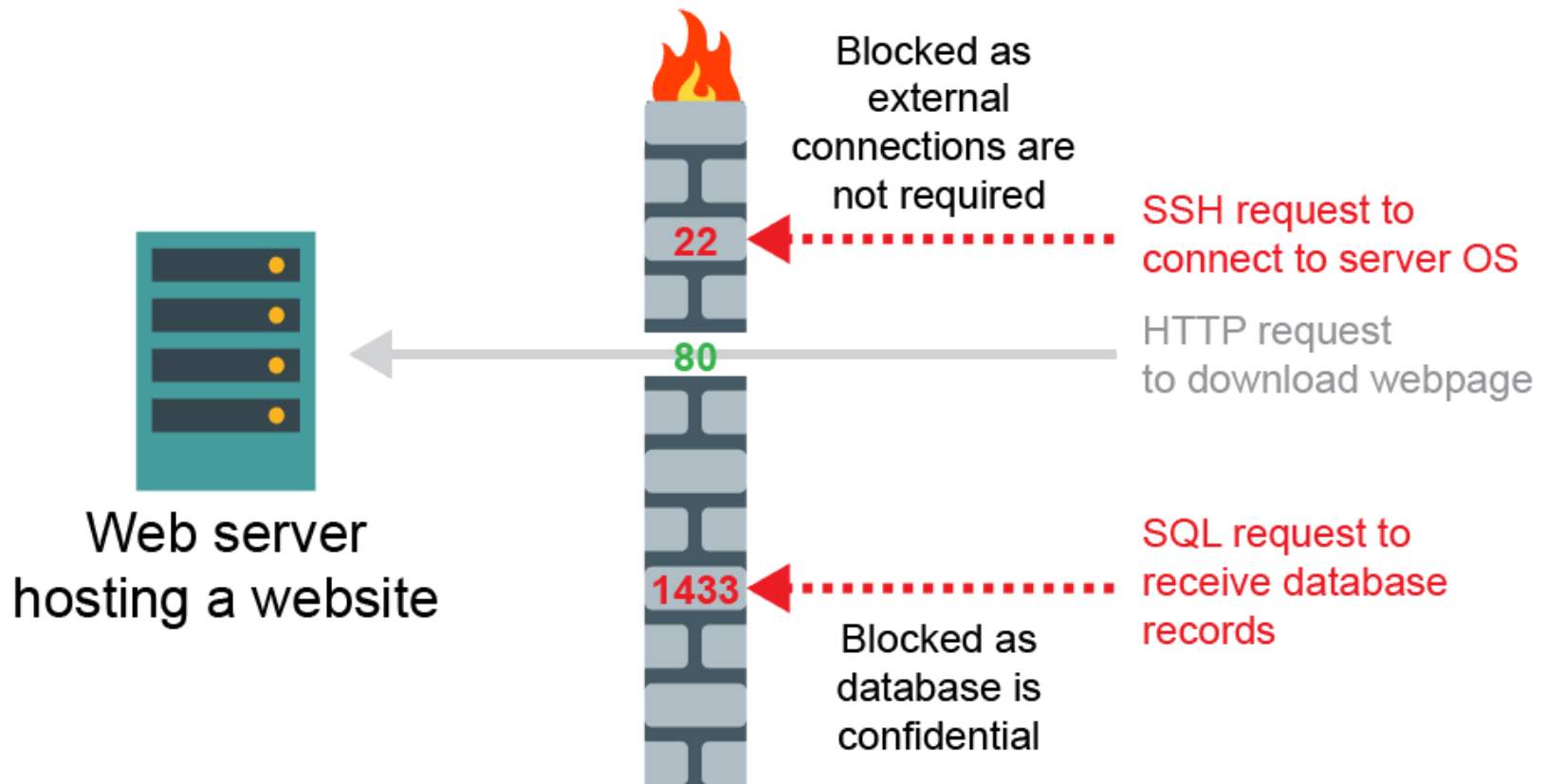


Packet filtering

- Packets of data are inspected by the firewall to check which port they are attempting to access
- Different network protocols use different port numbers for example, HTTP traffic, used to transfer web page data, uses port 80 or 8080
- If this traffic is to be allowed through, the port must be opened for the duration of the connection, otherwise the firewall will automatically reject it
 - Why are ports not left open by default?

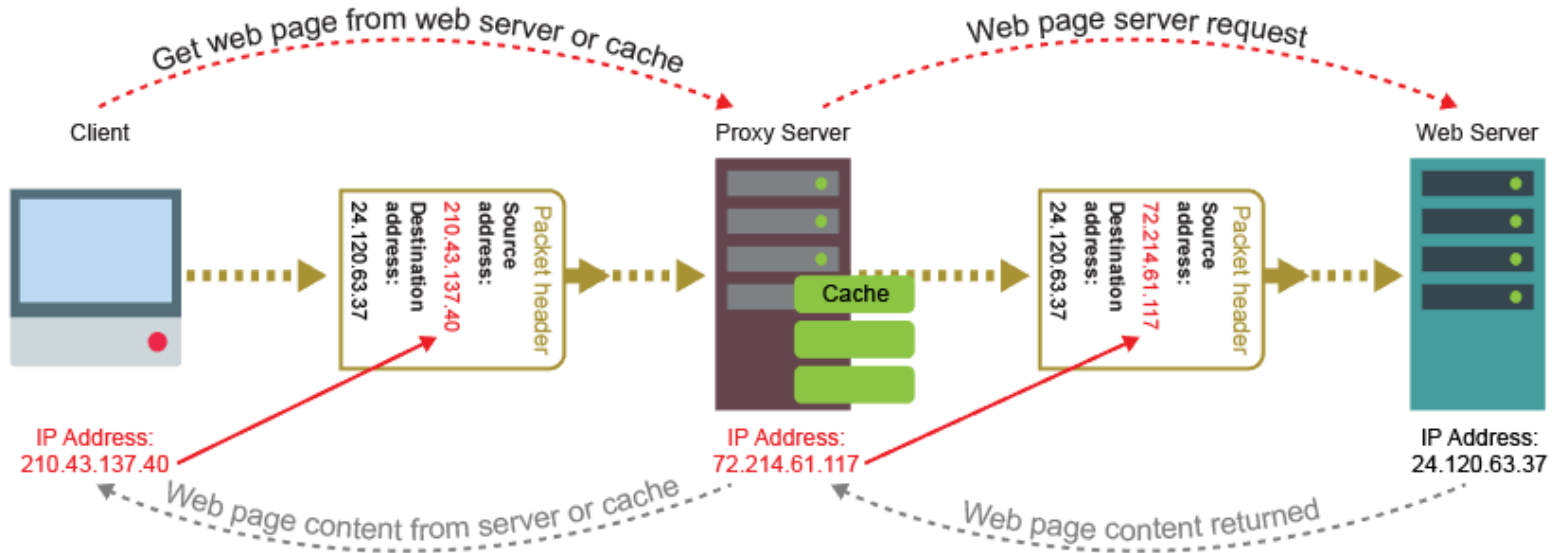


Blocking communications



Proxy servers

- 'Proxy' means *'on behalf of'*
 - A proxy server makes a web request on behalf of your own computer, hiding the true request IP addresses from the recipient



Functions of a proxy server

- A proxy server:
 - Enables anonymous surfing
 - Can be used to filter undesirable online content
 - Logs user data with their requests
 - Provides a cache of previously visited sites to speed access
- What happens if the website has been updated since the cached version?



Worksheet 3

- Complete **Task 1**



Encryption

- The act of encoding a plaintext message so that it cannot be deciphered unless you have a numerical key to decrypt it
 - If the message is intercepted it cannot be understood
 - If the key can be intercepted, the encryption process is rendered useless
 - (Encryption is covered in much greater detail in Unit 4)



Malicious software

- Malware annoys users or damages their data
- Worms and viruses self-replicate
- A virus infects (embeds itself in) other programs or data files
- A virus needs a user to help it spread
 - It is commonly found in email attachments with Macros



Worms

- A worm is a standalone program that does not require a user to run it in order for it to spread
 - Worms exploit vulnerabilities in the destination system and spread automatically



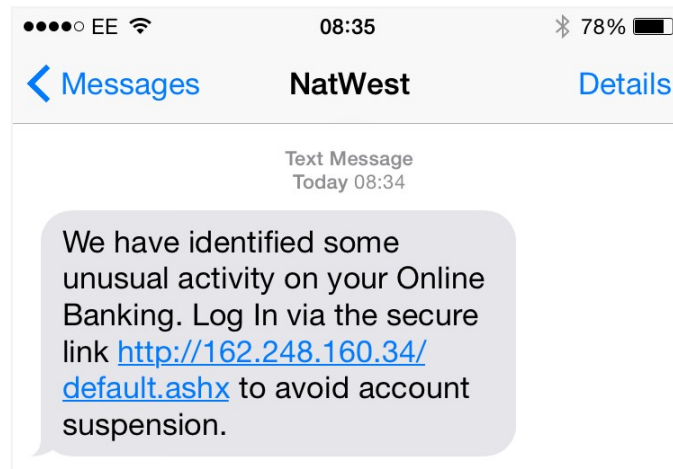
Trojans

- Trojans are malicious software programs that masquerade as innocuous or useful applications
 - They cannot self-replicate
 - Often they serve to open up back doors in your computer to the Internet so that the processing power, Internet bandwidth and data can be exploited remotely



Phishing

- Phishing is using email to manipulate a victim into visiting a fake website and giving away personal information
 - Who is most susceptible to such messages?
 - What are the consequences of clicking on such a link?



Code quality

- Improving code quality, together with monitoring attempts to gain unauthorised access and protection can significantly reduce threats from malware
- Measures include:
 - Guarding against buffer overflow attack
 - Guarding against SQL injection attack
 - Use of strong passwords for login credentials
 - Two-factor authentication
 - Use of access rights (file system permissions)

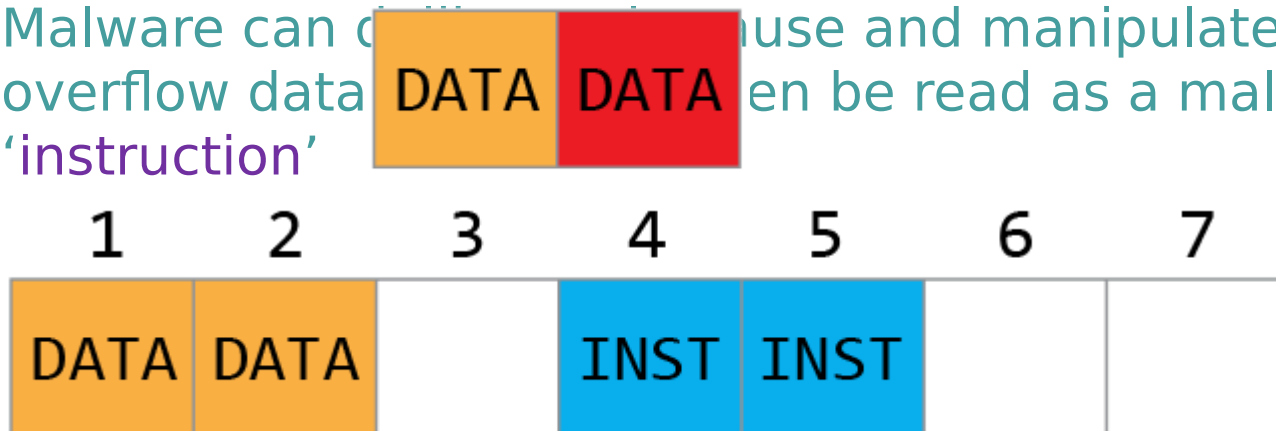


Buffer overflow

- Buffer overflow occurs when a program accidentally writes data to a location too small to handle it

- As a result the overflowed **data** (written to location #3 below) may end up in a neighbouring **instruction** space


- Malware can exploit this to use and manipulate overflow data. This can then be read as a malicious 'instruction'



SQL injection

- A malicious user can enter SQL commands via online database forms to change the processing
 - Imagine the following SQL for a banking web form below:

"S
tx

**Find your account details:**
Enter your Customer ID:

- This will produce the following SQL to display the correct account details, then delete the bank's entire accounts data



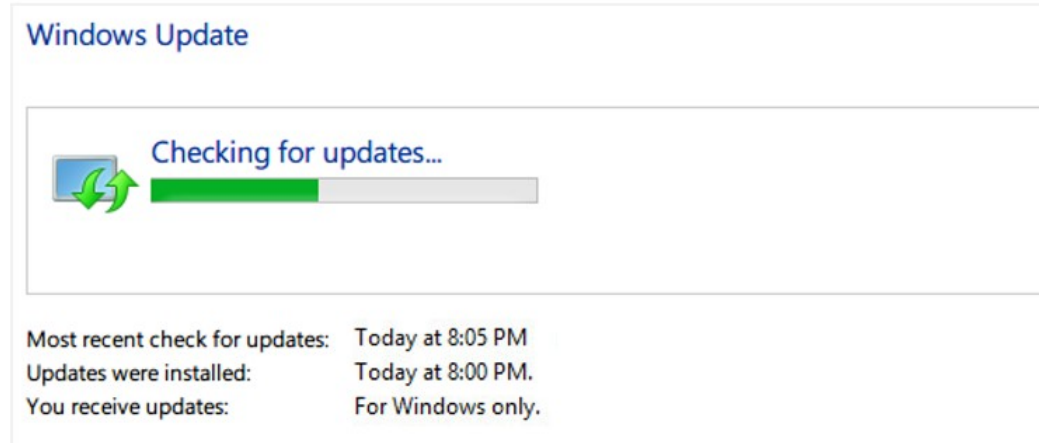
Monitoring

- Monitoring can protect against the threat of hacking, which can introduce malware
- These can be used to protect against the threat of malware and hacking
 - Packet sniffers
 - User access logs



Prevention

- Up-to-date patches to the operating system and application programs reduce vulnerabilities in the system
- Up-to-date anti-malware (“anti-virus”) software can prevent the spread of infection



Worksheet 3

- Complete **Tasks 2 - 4**



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